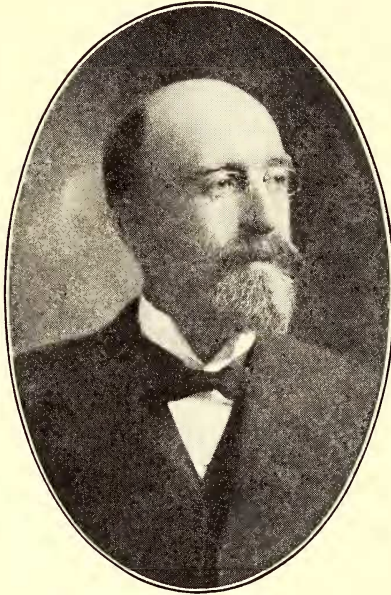


ANSTRUTHER DAVIDSON: AN APPRECIATION

JOSEPH EWAN

“He is a man full of interest—not ‘shelved,’ nor cynical, nor disappointed with life, but a trifle melancholy and above all full of sifted wisdom.” This is my recorded appraisal upon returning home from my last visit with Dr. Davidson just two months before his death on

April 3rd, 1932. “He sat in his easy rocker — the old cherry-wood sort, with stationary base—and between draughts on his made-as-needed cigarettes, foiled rather carelessly and twisted in the manner of taffy wrappers, he told of other days and California botany. His terse phrases concerning Hasse, Greta, Parish and others were flavored with personal understanding and accented with measured strokes of his goatee. His face is slender and sharp-featured, but set with eyes full of brightness.”



ANSTRUTHER DAVIDSON

Anstruther Davidson was born at Watten, Scotland, on February 19, 1860, being the son of George and Ann (Macadam) Davidson. He graduated in medicine from

the University of Glasgow with the degrees of M(edicinae) B(accalaurus) and C(hirurgiae) M(agister) at the age of twenty-one. Six years later he obtained his M.D. (1887). He emigrated to America two years later and in the same year began the practice of medicine in Los Angeles which was carried on practically continuously until his death. A dermatologist in the medical field, he was at one time assistant professor of that subject at the University of Southern California. He was a fellow of the American Medical Association. His skill in his chosen field was the basis of the regular visits made to the Good Samaritan Hospital of Los Angeles, when no longer in active practice, as consulting dermatologist, a schedule continued up to his last brief illness. During the preceding January Dr. Davidson was struck by an automobile and thrown forward to the pavement, suffering internal injuries, doubtless of a more serious nature than early realized, which were the almost certain cause of his death some three months later at the age of seventy-two.

In the fields of systematic botany and entomology Anstruther Davidson will certainly be permanently remembered for the early studies he carried out in these subjects in Southern California. His entomological papers cannot be considered here but reference to the author index of Essig's *Insects of Western North America* will attest to his contributions in that field. He was a corresponding member of the Entomological Society of Philadelphia.

Davidson's botanical activities were carried out principally through the Southern California Academy of Sciences and through the medium of its *Bulletin*. He served as the second president of the society, from 1892 to 1894, being re-elected for a second term. He was among the founders of the society and served as treasurer, as a member of the board of directors and of the publication board. In short he was an active associate for forty-one years.

As the leader of the Academy's Botanical Section meetings he will be long remembered by those who enjoyed the discussions centering about plant materials brought in by members and interested persons. New or rare plants were brought to light in this way: *Fremontodendron mexicanum*, for example, was brought to a meeting by Theodore Payne and Dr. Davidson recognized its distinctness.

Of the acceptance of Davidson's published botanical studies there will be certain disagreement, particularly as to the "fineness of species," but there can never be doubt as to his sincerity. He had well founded ideas in mind when proposing new taxonomic units and a close study of the Southern California flora bears out in most instances the value of his proposals, though too strongly accented at times. It was in the genera *Mentzelia*, *Allium*, and *Lupinus* that he made the greater number of proposals. His close study of the weed population about Los Angeles correlated splendidly with that of Parish about San Bernardino to give an exceptionally complete account of the immigrant element in the flora of the region. On the basis of a rather extended stay at Clifton, Greenlee County, Arizona, he published the only account of the flora of Arizona that has yet appeared, being an attempt to give synoptically but completely a list of the plants of a relatively small area.

His most extensive work, done in collaboration with George L. Moxley, was the "Flora of Southern California" published in 1923. Unfortunately this book was moved into print too hastily to eradicate the many errors that appear, chiefly in the citation of the authors of binomials, but it serves, nevertheless, as a stimulus to the more ambitious explorers of the Southern California flora. By its citation of definite localities for lesser known species, a new station for a plant is at once recognizable, and in this way it has distinctly energized the study of our native plants.

Dr. Davidson's herbarium was donated before his death to the Los Angeles (County) Museum of Art, History and Science. He was a member of the board of governors of the museum for twenty-two years. It is a highly interesting herbarium, for although he did not attempt to exchange widely, there are many sheets of considerable value, acquired by exchange from contemporary California collectors. His

own collections were rather widely but thinly distributed; there being material at the University of California, at the Dudley Herbarium of Stanford University, the United States National Herbarium and certain selected items at the Gray Herbarium.

Many botanists have commemorated Davidson in the naming of his California or Arizona collections. Thus Greene has named an *Eriogonum* and *Lotus* for him; Abrams, an *Acrolasia* (*Mentzelia*) and *Calochortus*; Parish, a little-known *Collinsia*; and Robinson, the endemic *Malvastrum* of the San Fernando Valley region. In his profession Anstruther Davidson was preëminent, and in his scientific contributions, of pioneering importance in a manifestly little-harrowed field of study. Thus he remains in California's progress.

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NOTES AND NEWS

The Death Valley region, well-known to botanists for its vegetative features and ecological interest, was created a national monument by President Hoover on February 11, 1933.

Under the title "More New Plants from Oregon," Professor Morton E. Peck of Willamette University publishes twelve new species of spermatophytes from the state of Oregon (*Torreyia* 32:147-153).

Miss Elizabeth Morse, who for several years has been engaged with investigations on the Pacific Coast fungi at the University of California, has provided funds for assistance in the mycological department of the University Herbarium. Miss Vera Mentzer, graduate student in botany at the University of California, has been chosen to do this work.

The National Research Council has granted a fellowship to Dr. David Goddard of the Department of Botany, University of California. Dr. Goddard left in August, 1933 for New York City where he will carry on his studies at the Rockefeller Institute.

Miss Mary L. Bowerman, graduate student in botany at the University of California, has undertaken a study leading to a comparison of the flora of the Marquesas Islands with those of the Society, the Samoan, and the Hawaiian Islands. This work is being done in connection with the Pacific Entomological Survey, which is under the direction of Dr. Edward P. Mumford of Honolulu.